II. REMARKS:

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The above amendments to the claims have been made to bring the application into better condition for examination by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Applicants assert that no new matter is being introduced by the proposed amendments and that the newly added and amended claims are supported by the specification. A marked up copy of all claims is attached to this paper for use by the Examiner. Applicants submit that the amendments do not narrow the scope of protection sought in any manner. Further these amendments are being made for purposes unrelated to the art of record and have been made to place the application in the best format possible for examination by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

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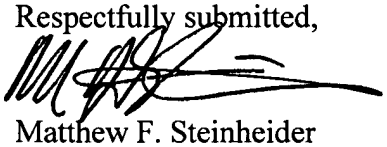
Applicants hereby request for any extension of time that may be deemed necessary to further the prosecution of this application. Applicants' representative hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 01-2508, referencing Order No. 12350.0008.NPUS00.

In order to facilitate the resolution of any issues or questions presented by this paper, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner directly contact the undersigned by phone to further the discussion.

In order to promote the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby authorized to contact the undersigned by electronic mail. Please address all e-mail to: steinheiderm@howrey.com.

Respectfully submitted,



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MARKED UP COPY OF ALL CLAIMS:

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1. (amended) A method for finishing a metal article, comprising the steps of:
   a) placing said metal article in a [vibratory]finishing apparatus[bowl and/or the like,] in combination with:
      i. a chemical solution capable of reacting with the surface of said metal article to convert [it]the surface of said metal article to a softer form, and
      ii. a non-abrasive media; and
   b) agitating said metal article, non-abrasive media, and chemical solution in said finishing apparatus[bowl] until a desired surface property of the metal article is reached.[for a time sufficient to impart on said article a surface that is superfinished, isotropic, and of specular brightness.]
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said non-abrasive media are made from a material that includes a plastic.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said non-abrasive media are made from a material that includes alumina bonded with an unsaturated polyester resin.
4. The method of claims 1, wherein said non-abrasive media are made from a material that includes a metal.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein said non-abrasive media are made from a material that includes stainless steel.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein said non-abrasive media are made from a material that includes 302 grade stainless steel.
7. (amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the surface property[finish] is superior to that produced by non-abrasive ceramic media or other abrasive media.
8. (amended) A[n] metal article that is finished using the process of any of claims 1-6.
9. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the finishing apparatus is vibratory.
10. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the surface property of the metal article is selected from the group consisting of superfinish, isotropic, specular brightness and combinations thereof.

11. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein said non-abrasive media are selected from the group consisting of plastic, alumina bonded with an unsaturated polyester resin, metal, stainless steel, 302 grade stainless steel, and combinations thereof.

12. (new) A metal article finished by a method comprising the steps of:

a) placing said metal article in a finishing apparatus in combination with:

i. a chemical solution capable of reacting with the surface of said metal article to convert the surface of said metal article to a softer form, and

ii. a non-abrasive media; and

b) agitating said metal article, non-abrasive media, and chemical solution in said finishing apparatus until a desired surface property of the metal article is reached.

13. (new) The metal article of claim 12, wherein said non-abrasive media are made from a material that includes a plastic.

14. (new) The metal article of claim 12, wherein said non-abrasive media are made from a material that includes alumina bonded with an unsaturated polyester resin.

15. (new) The metal article of claim 12, wherein said non-abrasive media are made from a material that includes a metal.

16. (new) The metal article of claim 12, wherein said non-abrasive media are made from a material that includes stainless steel.

17. (new) The metal article of claim 12, wherein said non-abrasive media are made from a material that includes 302 grade stainless steel.

18. (new) The metal article of claim 12, wherein the surface property is superior to that produced by non-abrasive ceramic media or other abrasive media.

19. (new) The metal article of claim 12, wherein the finishing apparatus is vibratory.

20. (new) The metal article of claim 12, wherein the surface property of the metal article is selected from the group consisting of superfinish, isotropic, specular brightness and combinations thereof.

21. (new) The metal article of claim 12, wherein said non-abrasive media are selected from the group consisting of plastic, alumina bonded with an unsaturated polyester resin, metal, stainless steel, 302 grade stainless steel, and combinations thereof.